

British unfold scheme for perpetual war in Balkans

by Mark Burdman

The first days of July will mark a crucial turning-point—but not any solution—for the increasingly bloody chaos engulfing the territory of former Yugoslavia. On July 1, Great Britain takes over the rotating six-month presidency of the European Community. This position will give the British establishment enormous leverage to institutionalize various of their diplomatic plans for the crisis. These plans have the immediate tactical aim of legitimizing a renewed, British-patronized “Greater Serbia” option for a post-Milosevic era in Serbia, and of bringing British-allied monarchies to rule throughout the Balkans region.

The broader British strategic aim is to keep alive, through “crisis management” and “balance of power” diplomatic methods, a Balkans war process that is reminiscent of the Thirty Years’ War in Europe in the 17th century. With this process, the Anglo-American elites hope to bleed continental Europe, by causing vast economic and infrastructure destruction in southeastern Europe, unprecedented flows of refugees, and political chaos.

On June 19, the London *Guardian* published an article laying out the basic guidelines of British diplomatic policy toward ex-Yugoslavia, authored by Dr. Jonathan Eyal, of the Royal United Services Institute, a British government-backed think tank. Eyal’s first principle is that the contours of a post-Milosevic era must be formed around ensuring that “the Serbian nation’s legitimate fears are properly addressed.” Linked to this, a prospective European Community conference on Yugoslavia should address the predominant issues “without fears or preconditions. The conference should accept that some territorial adjustments and voluntary repatriations of ethnic minorities are inevitable.”

Eyal is in effect recommending that Serbia’s territorial grabs in Croatia, Bosnia, and elsewhere be legitimized, and

that transfers of populations be carried out under international auspices. Astonishingly, but representative of the consensus view in London, Eyal is giving “the Serbian nation’s legitimate fears” a higher place of prominence on the agenda than the brutal massacres and acts of repression committed against the Croatian, Bosnian, and Kosovo Albanian populations over the past months. Eyal justifies this approach with the cynical pragmatism typical of the British establishment: “The conflict offers no opportunity for neat solutions. The task is to manage Serbia’s accommodation in the Balkans as peacefully as possible. If the opportunity is missed and a new Serbian leadership finds itself isolated, the entire area will be condemned to years of war and misery.”

British puppet claims Serbia’s throne

The entire gambit is contingent on the success of the monarchy option. The anti-Milosevic opposition is championing Crown Prince Alexander’s claim to lead the Serbian state. He will arrive in Belgrade on June 28, the emotionally charged anniversary of the battle of Kosovo in 1389, when Serbia was defeated by the Turks. Large rallies, planned to coincide with the prince’s arrival, could give the political impetus to end Milosevic’s rule.

Alexander positioned himself to play his assigned role as protector of the Serbian people in a post-Milosevic era, with a June 23 speech—British accent and all—before the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. He charged that the international diplomatic offensive against Milosevic is “increasingly acquiring the character of a campaign against the Serb people and Serbia as such. The Serbian people have given ample proof that they, too, are victims of this regime.” He charged that the sanctions against Serbia were “one-sided, because they treat the Serb side as the only guilty party in the

dispute, which it clearly is not." Beyond this, he attacked the international community for recognizing the independence of the former Yugoslav republics, insisting that Serbia had suffered the most from the way the late Marshal Josip Broz Tito had set up the structure of Yugoslavia.

His solution? The establishment of a national coalition government, with himself as head of state. This, Alexander claimed, would be his "sacred duty."

Previously, in an interview with France's *Le Figaro* June 11, Alexander had made it clear that he intends to actively intervene into the internal situations of both Bosnia and Croatia, and that "the violence will persist," if these nations don't recognize various Serbian claims.

Whatever backing Alexander will have received in Washington, the interview in *Figaro* is one sign that there is sympathy in Paris for the British game-plan. A senior European Commission member from France told *EIR* June 24 that "the British effort to bring back the king in Yugoslavia is a good thing."

Sources close to the crown prince have told *EIR* that there is a direct link between his June 27-28 weekend return, the assumption of the EC presidency by Great Britain, and the holding of a Yugoslavia conference along the lines specified by Eyal. "Alexander could be extremely useful for a peace settlement," one aide to Alexander said June 24. Even if his going back to Serbia could be a "high-risk operation," the British are fully encouraging him to do it, and have "high hopes" that he could "electrify" the opposition to overthrow Milosevic, and thereby expedite the British diplomatic moves. Said this source: "You have to understand, Crown Prince Alexander is an essential part of the British establishment. He meets Lord Carrington regularly. The British establishment works by old boys' networks, and Alexander is part of those. The approval for his return has been signaled the way the British do it, by rumors, whispers, and winks."

Carrington and his NATO options

Reports from European diplomatic sources are that the British diplomatic efforts will be based on threats and enticements. Reportedly, at the June 25 meeting in Strasbourg, France convened by Lord Carrington, the EC's super-plenipotentiary for Yugoslavia, Carrington is planning to make threats, during the private part of the talks, that the representatives from the former Yugoslav republics either find some way to politically bring about the fall of Milosevic, or military actions will be carried out to enforce a "solution." What is being mooted, these diplomatic sources affirm, is a naval blockade as a first step, then the bombing of the outskirts of Sarajevo as a second step, and, following this, selective bombings of Serbian infrastructural capacities.

Such a strategy would, in and of itself, probably worsen the conflict substantially. As European experts familiar with the terrain have stressed, the Serbian fighters are trained in methods of classic irregular guerrilla warfare, particularly in

mountain fighting. Any intervention from the outside would have to be prepared to deal with this, particularly by unleashing *counter*-irregular warfare capabilities, by giving the Bosnians, Croats, etc. the logistical and military wherewithal to fight back. Primary dependence on air power would be, at best, ineffective.

Politically, it would be crucial for the Europeans to come up with some form of intervention strategy *independently of the Anglo-Americans*, especially to prevent some "Operation Balkans Storm" from becoming U.S. President George Bush's next global ploy to shore up his reelection campaign. Indeed, increasingly warlike tones are being heard from Washington, with more or less overt threats of military intervention coming during the week of June 22 from Secretary of State James Baker III and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft.

In the absence of an independent European move being planned, the plans for intervention are increasingly coming under a NATO umbrella. On June 24, both outgoing NATO Commander Gen. John Galvin and incoming NATO Commander Gen. John Shalikashvili spoke of NATO being best fit to intervene in the Yugoslav theater. Shalikashvili said that "resolving ethnic conflicts" would be NATO's priority task in Europe for the coming years. Equally troublesome, is that French Defense Minister Pierre Joxe has stated that the recently announced Franco-German-led "Euro-Corps" should be operationally subordinated to NATO.

Milosevic's next target: Kosovo

The dangers are all the greater, as the prospects for a widening Balkans war increase by the day. High-level Serbian sources warn that Milosevic, in desperation, might move preemptively in the next days to open a new war front, against the Albanians in Kosovo. On June 23, Serbian police moved to close down the opening session of a just-elected Parliament of Kosovo. Azem Vllasi, a leader of the Kosovo democratic political movement who serves as itinerant Kosovo ambassador in the Balkans, told France's *Le Monde* June 24, that "the Serbian logic is to kill 1,000 Albanians to force 50,000 to flee. . . . The goal of Belgrade is not only to become the power 'on site,' but to 'Serbify' the region. . . . The Serbs want to increase the pressures, both police and social, on the Albanians of Kosovo, in order to make the largest possible number flee, and to apply their plan of repopulating the province with Serbs, notably Serbs of Croatia. . . . Kosovo's turn will come after that of Bosnia-Herzegovina."

The slaughter in Bosnia has reached nightmarish proportions, with one humanitarian organization claiming that 50,000 Bosnians have already died in the fighting. On June 25, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman told *Le Figaro* that "Croatia will have to intervene if the war continues in Bosnia." In the past days, the leaders of Croatia and Bosnia have signed a formal defense pact, the first such bilateral pact in Europe since the Second World War.